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Oppn moves motion to oust RS Chairman

INDIA accuses Dhankar of partisan conduct

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

In a first, parties of INDIA bloc on Tuesday submitted a notice to bring a motion in Rajya Sabha for the removal of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, accusing him of "partisan" conduct as the chairman of the Upper House.

If the motion is moved, these parties need a simple majority to get it passed, but they do not have the requisite numbers in the 243-member House. Opposition members, however, insisted that it was a "strong message to fight for parliamentary democracy".

Congress leaders Jairam Ramesh and Naseer Hussain submitted the notice signed by 60 Opposition MPs – including from the Congress, RJD, TMC, CPI, CPI-M, JMM, AAP, DMK, Samajwadi Party – to Rajya Sabha Secretary General P C Mody.

This is the first time that a notice for bringing a motion to remove the Vice President has been moved in the Rajya Sabha.

PHOTO: PTI

A 14-day notice has to be given and it should be approved by the Deputy Chairman.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress Parliamentary Party Chairperson Sonia Gandhi and the floor leaders of Opposition parties are not among the signatories.

Three motions have come in the past against Lok Sabha Speakers - against GV Mavalankar on 18 December, 1954, against Hukam Singh on 24 November, 1966 and against Balram Jakhar on 15 April, 1987.

While the motions against Mavalankar and Jahar were negatived, that against Hukam was rejected as less than 50 members rose in the chair.

The Opposition has been upset him allowing BJP to raise the allegations of links between Congress leaders and organisations backed by billionaire investor George Soros, which the ruling party claims are involved in "anti-India activities". The Opposition said his conduct of the House on 9 December, 2024, was one-sided and unfair, and said he was "encouraging and provoking" the Treasury Benches to make outrageous remarks. They also mentioned an instance from July this year, where Dhankar, while presiding as Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha, labelled himself as the "Eklavya of RSS".

Meanwhile, Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Kiren Rijiju said that NDA has a majority mark in Rajya Sabha. Rijiju called INDIA bloc's move as 'extremely regrettable' —*PTI*

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People arrive to pay tribute to former CM S M Krishna, in Bengaluru on Tuesday **PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD**

Man behind B'luru IT hub SM Krishna is no more

BENGALURU/ BELAGAVI, 10 DEC

Former External Affairs minister and chief minister SM Krishna died at his residence early Tuesday morning. The 92-year-old veteran politician was ailing for quite some time, a family source said.

Somanahalli Mallaiah Krishna is survived by wife Prema and two daughters.

The Karnataka government has announced state mourning for three days as a mark of respect to the veteran leader.

His last rites will be performed with full state honours at his native in Mandya on Wednesday.

The three-day state mourning is from 10 to 12 December.

Karnataka Assembly paid tributes to Krishna, with leaders cutting across parties describing the departed leader as a "gentleman politician", "statesman", and lauding his contribution in making Bengaluru an IT hub.

Leaders also expressed their admiration for his dressing sense, command over language, and love for the game of tennis.

Speaker UT Khader moved the obituary reference and described Krishna as a stalwart. He said Krishana has served all the four Houses -- Legislative Assembly, Legislative Council, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha-- and he was never involved in negative thinking.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah. said during his college days studying BSc, he was a fan of Krishna, and had supported him when he contested the 1968 Lok Sabha by-polls from the Praja Socialist Party.

Leader of Opposition R Ashoka said, people of Bengaluru can never forget Krishna, like they can't forget the founder of the city, Kempegowda.

Ministers G Parameshwara and HK Patil, who were also part of Krishna's Cabinet, shared several anecdotes of their several interactions and time spent with him.

Parameshwara stated that Krishna had a sporting attitude, as he recalled how he dealt with challenges one after the other during his tenure as chief minister, like drought, the Cauvery river dispute and agitations, kidnapping of Kannada thespian Rajkumar by forest brigand Veerappan. —*PTI*

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> **Krishna had wholeheartedly welcomed me into Congress. He never indulged in any vendetta politics. He was a politician with a rare personality. Karnataka will forever remain indebted to him, especially for his visionary leadership in transforming the IT-BT sector during his tenure as Chief Minister**
>
> —Siddaramaiah, CM

> **SM Krishna Ji was a remarkable leader, admired by people from all walks of life. He always worked tirelessly to improve the lives of others. He is fondly remembered for his tenure as Karnataka's CM, particularly for his focus on infrastructural development. He was also a prolific reader and thinker**
>
> —Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

SC takes note of HC judge's communal barbs at VHP event

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

The Supreme Court on Tuesday called for details from the Allahabad High Court after taking note of news reports of the speech of Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav, a sitting high court judge, delivered at a VHP function.

While taking cognisance of Justice Yadav's reported speech, the Allahabad High Court was directed to furnish details over the matter.

The judge made the remarks on 8 December while addressing a provincial convention of the legal cell and high court unit of the Vishva Hindu Parishad in Allahabad High Court.

A day later, videos of the judge speaking on provocative issues, including the law working according to the majority, were circulated widely, triggering strong reactions from various opposition parties which questioned his reported statements and labelled it as hate speech.

Meanwhile, lawyer and convenor of the NGO, Campaign for Judicial Accountability and Reforms, Prashant Bhushan on Tuesday wrote a letter to Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna seeking an "in-house enquiry" into the conduct of Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav of the Allahabad High Court. —*PTI*

Police stop protesters who tried to barge into Suvarna Vikasa Soudha in Belagavi on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

Belagavi cops lathicharge Panchamasali protesters

BELAGAVI, 10 DEC

Police on Tuesday allegedly resorted to lathicharge as the protests by the Panchamasali Lingayats turned violent.

The protest led by the Panchamasalis is seeking inclusion in the 2A reservation category for education and government jobs. The unrest took place outside the Suvarna Vidhan Soudha during the Karnataka Winter Legislature session, resulting in injuries to around 20 individuals, including several police officers.

Over 10,000 protesters attempted to breach police barricades set up around the legislative premises, leading to chaos as stones were thrown at police and passing vehicles on the Pune-Bengaluru National Highway. The ensuing disruption caused major traffic delays, with hundreds of vehicles immobilised for over an hour.

Police, led by Additional Director General of Police R Hitendra, initially anticipated a peaceful demonstration but were forced to implement a lathi charge as tensions escalated. "The mob turned violent after they and Mrutynjaya Seer of the Kudalasangama Mutt were prevented from entering the Soudha," Hitendra reported. The seer, Basava Jaya Mruthyunjaya Swami, expressed his disappointment at the lack of adequate reservation for the community despite their political influence. Meanwhile, Panchamasali seer Basava Jayamrutunjaya Swami has called for road block from taluk headquarters to national highways on 12 December. —*Salar News*

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Farmers to resume 'Delhi Chalo' march today

CHANDIGARH, 10 DEC

Punjab farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher on Tuesday said protesting farmers will resume their foot march to Delhi on 14 December as there has been no message so far from the government side for holding talks.

The decision on the march was taken in a meeting of Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha on Tuesday.

Speaking to reporters at the Shambhu border protest site, Pandher said, "We did not want farmers to be blamed that they do not want to hold talks to find a way out. We gave time...but there has been no message from the government (Centre) side for talks. So, the path to agitation is open."

On Monday, Pandher had accused the Centre of being confused on how the protesters should proceed to the national capital. He had also said they will decide their next course of action in a meeting on Tuesday.

Agitating farmers suspended their foot march to Delhi from the Shambhu border on Sunday after some of them sustained injuries in teargas shelling by Haryana security personnel who thwarted yet another attempt by the protesters to cross the Punjab-Haryana border.

Meanwhile, farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal's fast unto death entered 15th day on Tuesday. —*PTI*

4 girls on school trip drown in Murdeshwar

MURDESHWAR, 10 DEC

Four students from a high school in Kolar were washed away by a high tide while playing on the beach at Murdeshwar in Uttara Kannada on Tuesday. The body of 15-year-old Shravanti was later recovered from the Arabian Sea, while three others remain missing.

The group of 46 students and six teachers from a high school in Kotturu, Maluru taluk, Kolar, had been on their annual educational tour to Uttara Kannada. While enjoying the beach, the unsuspecting group was caught off guard by a sudden surge in the tide. The high tide swept six students into the sea.

Rescue operations, carried out by expert swimmers, managed to save two of the students, Yadhoda and Veena, who were washed away with the others. However, the search for the three missing students, Deeksha, Laavanya, and Lipika, was halted as darkness fell. Authorities confirmed the recovery of Shravanti's body, but the search efforts would resume early Wednesday morning to locate the remaining students. —*Salar News*

Resolve drought aid issue: SC tells Centre and K'taka

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said the Centre and the Karnataka government should resolve financial assistance from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) to the State for drought management. The apex court was hearing a plea filed by the State seeking a direction to the Centre to release financial assistance from the NDRF.

Attorney General R Venkataramani, appearing for the Centre, told a bench of Justices BR Gavai and KV Viswanathan that he needed some time to file an affidavit in the matter. The counsel appearing for Karnataka said the state requested for Rs 18,171 crore and has been granted Rs 3,819 crore. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

Syria rebels name Al-Bashir as new PM

DAMASCUS, 10 DEC

The Syrian rebels now in power in Damascus appointed Mohammad al-Bashir as head of a transitional government that will be in place until March 1, state media said Tuesday. On Sunday, the rebels led by Islamist group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) seized the capital Damascus in a lightning offensive, toppling president Bashar al-Assad who fled the country.

Syria's opposition forces were in talks to take formal control of the country after capturing swaths of territory, including Damascus, and ousting President Bashar al-Assad. Opposition leader Ahmed al-Sharaa, also known as Abu Mohammed al-Julani, met outgoing Prime Minister Mohammed al-Jalali on Monday. —*PTI*

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WIFE, FAMILY BOOKED

#MenToo trends after City techie blames wife before killing self

BENGALURU, 10 DEC

A day after a 34-year-old techie from Uttar Pradesh died by suicide after blaming his wife and her family, the police on Tuesday said they have been booked for abetment of suicide.

Atul Subhash, who worked for a private firm in Bengaluru, left behind a 24-page death note and an hour-long video alleging harassment by his wife, her relatives, and a judge based in Uttar Pradesh, police said.

The incident that occurred in the Manjunath Layout area has led to an outrage on social media against the atrocities against men that go unnoticed, with the hashtag #MenToo trending on X (formerly Twitter).

Atul Subhash **PHOTO: X**

Several X users expressed outrage, calling for justice and raising awareness about the struggles men face in relationships and legal matters. One user wrote, "Atul Subhash's case is just one of many in India. Countless similar stories remain unheard. Honestly, our justice system is so broken." Another commented, "An innocent man has taken his life after harassment faced by the judiciary. In the last part of his 1.5-hour-long video, he mentioned his last wishes before suicide. Sorry brother, we couldn't save you. Rest in peace."A netizen on X wrote, "It's a crime to be a man in India". Another X user Dr BL Bairwa said "judiciary has killed Atul". While another user said Atul Subhash's case is just one of many in India and there are countless similar stories remain unheard. "Honestly, our justice system is so broken," read the post. Meanwhile, police said that the wife and her family demanded Rs 3 crore to settle false cases they filed against him. —*Salar News with Agencies*

Courts must stop misuse of law in dowry cases: SC

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Supreme Court on Tuesday said courts must exercise caution in dowry harassment cases to prevent misuse of law and avoid unnecessary trouble to innocent family members observing a tendency to implicate husband's kin.

A bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and N Kotiswar Singh said a mere reference to the names of family members in a criminal case arising out of a matrimonial dispute, without specific allegations indicating their active involvement, should be nipped in the bud.

The top court, therefore, said courts must exercise caution in such cases to prevent misuse of legal provisions and the legal process and avoid unnecessary harassment of innocent family members. The observations came when the court set aside an order of the Telangana High Court that had refused to quash a dowry harassment case against a man, his parents and other family members lodged by the wife. The court said inclusion of Section 498A of the IPC was intended to curb cruelty inflicted on a woman by her husband and his family . "However, in recent years, as there have been a notable rise in matrimonial disputes, accompanied by growing discord and tension within marriaged, consequently, there has been a growing tendency to misuse provisions like Section 498A," the bench said. —*PTI*

Panchamasali members didn't turn up for talks: CM

Everyone has right to protest in a democracy, says CM

BELAGAVI, 10 DEC

Amid protests by Panchamasali Lingayats' demanding higher reservation to the community, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday said he had called their representatives for discussion, but they did not turn up.

He said everyone has the right to protest in a democracy and his government is not opposed to it.

"I had asked them to come (for discussion). They did not come. I had asked ten (representatives) to come, they did not come. As the Assembly adjourned, I'm leaving," Siddaramaiah said.

When told that protesters have threatened to continue with the agitation, he said, "We are not opposed to protesting in a democracy. Everyone has a right to protest in a democracy and they are doing it."

Police resorted to lathicharge as the protests by Panchamasali Lingayats in Belagavi on Tuesday turned violent PHOTO: X

Panchamasali Lingayats, a sub-sect of the dominant Veerashaiva-Lingayat community, led by Kudalasangama Panchamasali Peetha seer Basava Jaya Mruthyunjaya Swami, today staged a protest near Suvarna Vidhana Soudha here demanding to be included in category 2A (15 per cent) of OBC reservation matrix. They are currently included under 3B (5 per cent).

Responding to a question on Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aaditya Thackeray's demand that Belagavi, bordering Maharashtra, be declared a Union Territory, the Chief Minister said, "Mahajan committee report is final. If they repeatedly say that Belagavi belongs to Maharashtra, it is their stupidity. This is a childish statement. Karnataka government won't tolerate it." —PTI

CM OFFERS HOMES TO LANDSLIDE VICTIMS IN KERALA

BENGALURU, 10 DEC

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has written to his Kerala counterpart, Pinarayi Vijayan, stating that his government is prepared to purchase land for constructing houses in Wayanad for families affected by the devastating landslides.

In a letter dated 9 December, shared on Tuesday, Siddaramaiah reiterated his government's commitment to donate 100 houses to support the affected families. This was announced during his visit to Wayanad following the "unfortunate" landslide incident.

Siddaramaiah emphasised that the initiative aims to provide a secure and stable environment for those who lost their homes, livelihoods, and loved ones.

He mentioned that the announcement was communicated to Kerala's Chief Secretary for further coordination. However, he expressed concern over the lack of communication from the Kerala government regarding the necessary guidelines or directions to implement the project, which has delayed progress. —PTI

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Resolve drought aid issue, SC tells Centre & State

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said the Centre and the Karnataka government should resolve financial assistance from the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) to the State for drought management.

The apex court was hearing a plea filed by the State seeking a direction to the Centre to release financial assistance from the NDRF.

Attorney General R Venkataramani, appearing for the Centre, told a bench of Justices BR Gavai and

KV Viswanathan that he needed some time to file an affidavit in the matter.

The counsel appearing for Karnataka said the state requested for Rs 18,171 crore and has been granted Rs 3,819 crore.

The petition has sought to declare that the Centre's decision to not release the full financial assistance for drought management according to the NDRF is "ex-facie violative" of the fundamental rights of the people of the state guaranteed under Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution.

It said the state was reeling under "severe drought", affecting the lives of its people and in the kharif 2023 season, which starts in June and ends in September, 223 of the 236 'taluks' were declared as drought-affected.

The plea said 196 taluks were categorised as severely affected and the remaining 27 as moderately affected.

"Cumulatively for kharif 2023 season, the crop loss has been reported in more than 48 lakh hectares with the estimated loss (cost of cultivation) of Rs 35,162 crore," said the plea filed through advocate DL Chidananda.

The Supreme Court bench posted the matter for hearing in January. —PTI

Brace for power cuts today & tomorrow

BENGALURU, 10 DEC

Several areas in City, particularly in the Koramangala and Adugodi sub-divisions, will experience power cuts on 11 and 12 December due to maintenance work by the Karnataka Power Transmission Corporation Limited (KPTCL).According to a notification from the Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (BESCOM), power outages are expected between 10am and pm in Bellandur, RMZ, Devarabeesanahalli, Sakra Hospital, Madiwala, Jogi Colony, St John's Staff Quarters, Maruthinagar, City Armed Reserve (CAR) Police Quarters, Dollars Colony, KHB Colony, SG Palya, and surrounding areas. Residents and businesses in these areas are advised to plan accordingly to minimize inconvenience during the scheduled outages. —*Salar News*

Lokayukta raids unearth officials' stash

BENGALURU, 10 DEC

Lokayukta police conducted simultaneous raids in several parts of the State, including Bengaluru, on Tuesday as part of their crackdown on government officials possessing assets disproportionate to their known sources of income.

Lokayukta officials who arrived at the residence of District Health Officer (DHO) Dr Sunil Kumar at Basaveshwara Nagar in Bengaluru were confronted by the family.

They refused to cooperate, arguing with the officials and locking themselves inside. It was only after jurisdictional police intervention that the family allowed the sleuths enter the building.

Lokayukta officials also raided two premises belonging to Hiriyur Range Forest Officer Suresh – one in Bengaluru and his office at Hiriyur in Chitradurga district. The sleuths found 1kg gold ornaments and Rs 5 lakh in cash, besides documents of nine acres of agricultural land and three residential plots. Suresh was taken into custody following the operation.

Valuables and cash found at the house of Kalaburagi City Corporation Deputy Commissioner RP Jadhav on Tuesday PHOTO: SALAR

In Kalaburagi, raids were conducted at multiple properties linked to City Corporation Deputy Commissioner RP Jadhav. Officials searched his residence in Jewargi Colony, a farmhouse and his office, uncovering 30 grams of gold, a few two-wheelers and vehicles and property documents. Jadhav has been associated with the corporation for two decades.

Excise Inspector Ramesh Agadi also came under scrutiny, with Lokayukta officials raiding his rented house in BT Patil Nagar, his office and a farmhouse in Tummaraguddi village of Yelburga taluk. Several incriminating documents were seized during the searches.

Further investigations are underway to verify the assets and determine the extent of irregularities committed by these officials. —*Salar News*

BEML bags Rs 83 cr worth order from Defence Ministry

BENGALURU, 10 DEC

BEML Limited, a Public Sector Undertaking, announced on Tuesday that it has secured a contract from the Ministry of Defence for supplying a 50-ton trailer valued at Rs 83.51 crore.

This order highlights BEML's strength and capability in delivering advanced, indigenous products to enhance India's defence infrastructure, the company said.

In a statement, BEML said, "The 50-ton heavy-duty trailer is specifically designed for the transportation of battle tanks and features 12 twin wheels for durability and stability in challenging terrains.

With a payload capacity of 50 tonne, the trailer is engineered to be towed by the BEML HMV 8x8 vehicle."

Notably, it includes advanced features such as a steerable turntable for 55-degree rotation in both directions, a twin-line air brake system, emergency brakes, and mechanically operated parking brakes, the statement added.

According to BEML, the rear chassis frame is equipped with a combination of fixed, hinged, and loose ramps to ensure the efficient loading of tanks. —PTI

460 motorists penalised in City for violations

BENGALURU, 10 DEC

City Traffic Police conducted a special operation on Monday, inspecting over 518 vehicles across Bengaluru East. A total of 461 motorists were found violating various traffic rules and were penalised during the drive. The operation specifically targeted offenses such as driving on one-way roads, parking in no-parking zones, riding on footpaths, and triple riding. Offenders were intercepted and fined, with Rs 2,30,500 collected in fines.

Additionally, BTP took action against trucks and water tankers causing noise pollution in Whitefield by using shrill horns. These loud sounds have been a source of disturbance for residents. As part of the crackdown, 19 cases were booked against drivers using high-decibel horns, and Rs 25,000 in fines were collected during this phase. In total, 32 cases were registered against drivers using one-way roads illegally. —*Salar News*

FOR PALESTINE

People from various faiths and organisations take part in a protest titled 'Bridging Faiths For Palestine', in solidarity with the people of Palestine, at Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Tuesday PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Cox Town's market complex to open by month-end

BENGALURU, 10 DEC

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is set to inaugurate a state-of-the-art market complex with 42 shops at Cox Town in the City. After the completion of its construction more than a year ago, the facility is finally slated for inauguration by the month-end.

The new complex, a long-awaited project, brings significant relief to both traders and residents of the locality, which did not have a dedicated market in the area. Besides, relocating the roadside vendors to the complex will help ease traffic congestion in the area.

With the opening of the new facility, the residents of Cox Town can avoid travelling about 5km to Shivajinagar, which has the nearest major market.

Aisha Khan, a local resident, said, "The new market will be a blessing for us. It has been an inconvenience travelling far away markets to buy essentials."

While most traders are thrilled to move into the new facility, some have expressed concerns over the allocation of shops. They fear that political influence may steal the chance of those who have operated in the area for years getting priority.

Besides relocating some roadside vendors, the new market complex will help ease traffic congestion in the area PHOTOS: SALAR

Rajeshwari, a vegetable vendor, said, "We've been waiting for this market for long. It will be a great help for vendors like me who have been struggling without proper infrastructure.

"I hope the allocation will be fair and those who have been here for years get a chance to move in."

KN Ramesh, a BBMP official, said, "We are committed to ensure a fair allocation process, giving priority to long-time traders." —*Salar News*

PROPERTY TAX

Mahadevapura tops in tax collections

BENGALURU, 10 DEC

Mahadevapura zone has emerged as the top contributor in property tax collections for the current fiscal year by collecting by November-end Rs 1,154.49 crore out of the allocated target of Rs 1,309.04 crore for the city limits.

This represents an achievement of 88. per cent of the target, surpassing all other zones, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) said on Tuesday.

According to the BBMP, the zone's success has been attributed to focused efforts under the "One-Time Settlement" (OTS) scheme. Regular interaction with property owners, especially defaulters, has significantly boosted collections, it said.

KR Puram and Hoodi sub-divisions achieved 90 per cent of their respective targets, contributing to the overall success.

Efforts in E-Khata Distribution Mahadevapura has also prioritised swift issuance of E-Khatas. Of the 6,012 applications received final E-Khatas, 3,851 have already been processed, the BBMP said. Campaigns will be organised to encourage more property owners to apply for E-Khatas, it said.

BBMP Chief Commissioner Tushar Girinath said, "To address grievances related to E-Khatas and ensure transparency, a helpline (94806-83695) has been launched. People can use this to report any issues or instances of corruption."

BBMP property tax collection stands at Rs 4,286.04 crore out of a target of Rs 5,210.48 crore, achieving 82.26 per cent overall. East and south zones collected Rs 715.97 crore and Rs 617.77 crore, respectively. The amounts collected by other zones are: West zone Rs 486.47 crore, Bommanahall Rs 421.67 crore, Yelahanka Rs 415.08 crore, RR Nagar Rs 337.80 and Dasarahalli Rs 136.79. —*Salar News*

Zone	Targeted tax collection for 2024-25 (in Rs crore)	Collection in %
Mahadevapura	1,309.04	88.19%
East	891.89	80.28%
South	769.50	80.28%
West	610.39	79.70%
Bommanahalli	585.11	72.07%
Yelahanka	445.24	93.23%
RR Nagar	434.35	77.77%
Dasarahalli	164.95	82.93%
TOTAL	**5,210.48**	**82.26%**

State signs pact with US' New Jersey to boost tech ties

BENGALURU, 10 DEC

The government on Tuesday signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) with the New Jersey Department of State, US, marking a significant step towards enhancing global cooperation in technology, innovation, and economic development, officials said.

The Department said that the agreement will focus on Twin City Collaboration for promoting exchanges between Bengaluru and New Brunswick in identified focus areas.

In Startup Ecosystem Engagement, it will focus on developing programmes to foster synergies between the startup ecosystems of both regions.

The pact will focus on Twin City Collaboration between Bengaluru and New Brunswick PHOTO: X

Key areas of collaboration will include life sciences, deep technology, and electronics, it stated.

"This partnership with New Jersey is a significant milestone in Karnataka's mission to strengthen its position as a global hub for innovation. This collaboration presents, particularly in technology, startups, and key sectors like AI and electronics," said Ekroop Caur, Secretary to Government of Karnataka, Department of Electronics, Information Technology, Biotechnology and Science & Technology.

According to officials, this collaboration is aligned with Karnataka's Global Innovation Alliances (GIA) initiative. —PTI

> SM Krishna was like my father. His guidance and advice are evident in my life. He is the architect of Nava Karnataka. Kengal Hanumanthaiah built Vidhana Soudha and Krishna built Vikasa Soudha. Bengaluru International Airport and Metro train are his contributions. His contribution to the state economy is in-valuable
>
> —DK Shivakumar, Deputy CM

> SM Krishna was a true champion of development. His vision, dedication and exceptional public service played a pivotal role in Karnataka's progress, while his approach to balance welfare with development placed a global stamp on Bengaluru's transformative paradigm
>
> —Mallikarjun Kharge, Congress Chief

> SM Krishna served at several posts. Because of the efforts of the SM Krishna, Bengaluru city has become one of the development cities. He will be remembered for his works. He was a great person"
>
> —BS Yediyurappa, ex-chief minister

> I am saddened by the passing away of SM Krishna, my friend and longtime Karnataka colleague. We started out in politics around the same time, and cultivated very different approaches to development and governance. Om Shanti.
>
> —HD Deve Gowda, JD(S) patriarch

PHOTO: PTI

SM Krishna: A politician who scaled many heights

He was EAM, Guv, CM, DyCM, Speaker, MLC, MLA, KPCC prez

BENGALURU, 10 DEC

Not many politicians may have held positions as Somanahalli Mallaiah Krishna—SMK to his friends and the inner circle— did in his political career spanning over five decades.

From being a minister on different occasions in the State and at the Centre and a Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha member to heading Congress, he indeed had a long innings.

He served as a member of the legislative Council, Assembly, speaker, deputy chief minister, Union External Affairs minister and governor.

Boost to IT Hub

Suave and sophisticated with outstanding academic credentials, Krishna played his part with aplomb as the chief minister in promoting the tech sector and building "Brand Bengaluru".

"He played a proactive role in putting Bengaluru on the global map," a senior information technology industry executive said.

"He gave a boost to the IT sector during his tenure as the chief minister resulting in Bengaluru growing as an alternative to Silicon Valley in California and generating jobs for youths," he added.

Early life

Born in Somanahalli in Mandya on 1 May, 1932, Krishna kicked off his electoral foray in style winning as an Independent from Maddur against Congress stalwart KV Shankar Gowda in the 1962 Assembly elections.

He later associated himself with the Praja Socialist Party before joining Congress.

A graduate of Maharaja's College, Mysuru, he obtained a law degree from the Government Law College here.

Further, he studied at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, US, and later at George Washington University, where he was a Fulbright Scholar.

5-decade long career

He debuted in the Parliament in 1968 as a 'Socialist' MP and became a member of the fourth Lok Sabha.

Krishna was elected to the fifth Lok Sabha too but preferred to return to State politics in 1972 when he was elected to the Legislative Council and inducted as minister for Commerce, Industries and Parliamentary Affairs, a charge he held between 1972 and 1977.

In 1980, he returned to Lok Sabha and served as the minister of State for Industry from 1983-84, and minister of State for Fi-nance from 1984-85.

Krishna, an attorney-at-law, became the Speaker of Karnataka Legislative Assembly in 1989, and deputy chief minister in 1992. Elected to Rajya Sabha in 1996, he was its member till October 1999.

He was Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee president ahead of the 1999 assembly polls in which the party won.

He was chief minister from October 1999 to May 2004. He served as the governor of Maharashtra from December 2004 to March 2008, and as the External Affairs minister in the Manmohan Singh-led government from May 2009 to October 2012.

In 2017, he joined BJP, ending his nearly 50-year-long association with Congress.

He announced his retirement from politics on 7 January, 2023.

—PTI

SM Krishna's daughter and his wife at his residence, in Bengaluru on Tuesday

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

SM Krishna as a boy outside his Somanahalli residence

A rare family photo of Krishna with his siblings and family

Ex-KPCC president Krishna and former CM S Nijalingappa, with Sonia Gandhi before she filed her nomination from Ballari for 1999 LS poll

Krishna with ex-US president Barack Obama in 2010

PM Narendra Modi with Krishna during an rally in April 2019

Prema Krishna pays last respects to her husband in Bengaluru, on Tuesday

PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

Ex-PM Indira Gandhi with Krishna and his family at their residence

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar greets Krishna

Krishna with former PM Deve Gowda

President Droupadi Murmu presents Padma Vibhushan to Krishna during Padma Awards 2023 ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhawan

Hosur Road gets messy amid metro construction, neglect

HAMEED ASHRAF
BENGALURU, 9 DEC

The stretch of Hosur Road from Adugodi to Shoolay Circle, a vital artery connecting several key areas in Central Bengaluru, has become a glaring example of civic apathy. Crumbling infrastructure, compounded by the construction of Metro's Pink Line, has left commuters and residents grappling with severe inconveniences and safety risks.

For nearly three years, this stretch — linking Koramangala and major institutions such as Baldwin and Frank Anthony schools, has been in a deplorable state. Along with traffic bottlenecks, frequent waterlogging and dangerous potholes are common occurrences during rains.

For nearly three years, this stretch — linking Koramangala and major institutions such as Baldwin and Frank Anthony schools, has been in a deplorable state

PHOTO: SALAR

Unresponsive BBMP

The construction of the Metro Pink Line, which began in 2021, has narrowed road space, exacerbating the chaos during peak hours. The road, which was earmarked for upgrades under the TenderSURE (Specifications for Urban Road Execution) project in 2015, now sees potholes every 100 metres along a 2km stretch. Complaints have been pouring in for months, but residents allege that Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike has remained unresponsive.

Chaos for commuters, traders

Pedestrians have been forced to walk on the road near Rashtriya Military School due to the removal of footpaths. Radha Sharma, a college student, highlighted the risks: "Walking on the road is dangerous, especially during rain."

Motorists face equally dire conditions. "Last week while it was raining, I hit a water-filled pothole and nearly lost control of my bike," said Venkatesh R, a software engineer who drives daily from Adugodi to Brigade Road.

Shopkeepers in Johnson Market have also voiced their frustration. Ahmed Khan, who runs a bakery, said, "Customers avoid this area altogether because of the chaos."

BBMP cities budgetary constraints

BBMP officials have cited budgetary constraints for the lack of road maintenance. "Maintaining TenderSURE roads in central Bengaluru costs around Rs 4 crore annually. We had planned to outsource responsibility to private firms through CSR funding, but delays have stalled the process," said a senior BBMP official on condition of anonymity.

SALAR EXCLUSIVE

Shivaprakash KM, Executive Engineer, Road Infrastructure, BBMP, said the Metro project has restricted space for road repairs. "Temporary measures have been taken to fill some of the potholes, but we will focus on permanent solutions soon after the project," he said.

A Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) official defended the delays, saying, "Once the tunnelling and station work are completed, we will work with BBMP to restore the roads. The underground portion of the Pink Line is expected to be completed by December 2025 and the line will be operational by June 2026," he said.

Better coordination can minimise issues: Experts

However, urban planning experts argue that such issues could have been minimised with better coordination. "Globally, cities manage to maintain infrastructure even during major construction projects," said professor Anil Menon, an urban planner. "In Bengaluru, a lack of integrated planning and monitoring worsens the impact on residents.

Regular inspections, scientific road repairs, and strict accountability measures are crucial to prevent such situations."

Bengaluru traffic police, too, have raised concerns. "We are doing our best to manage the flow, but long-term solutions from civic authorities are needed," said a traffic officer stationed near Johnson Market. Despite all assurances, the question on everyone's mind remains unanswered: when will things finally improve?

—Salar News

PHOTO: ANI

Abhay Kumar to be India's new envoy to Georgia

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

Senior diplomat Abhay Kumar has been appointed India's new ambassador to Georgia. Kumar, a joint secretary at the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), is currently serving as deputy director general of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. Kumar joined the Indian Foreign Service in 2003 after completing his postgraduate degree in geography from the JNU. He served as India's 21st ambassador to Madagascar, concurrently accredited to Comoros, from 2019 to 2022, and as deputy chief of mission at the Indian Embassy in Brasilia from 2016 to 2019. —*PTI*

BJP MLC's uncle kidnapped, found killed hours later

PUNE, 10 DEC

Maharashtra BJP MLC Yogesh Tilekar's uncle was allegedly abducted and murdered by unidentified persons in Pune district, a police official said. The victim, Satish Wagh, 55, was bundled into an SUV near Shewalwadi Chowk in Hadapsar area of Pune city by four to five persons on Monday when he was out for a morning walk, prompting police to form several teams to trace him. Wagh, a farmer, was found murdered near Yavat on Pune-Solapur Highway, 40 kilometers from the abduction site. Multiple injuries were reported, and several teams are working to locate the accused. The family of Tilekar did not receive a ransom call or raise suspicion. Wagh had interests in farming and owned a hotel near Shewalwadi. —*PTI*

Satyendra files defamation suit against Bansuri

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

The Rouse Avenue court has listed the Complaint of Satyendar Jain for order on Pre Summoning evidence in support of his complaint against BJP MP Bansuri Swaraj on 16 December. Advocate Rajat Bhardwaj argued that the complainant should be allowed to lead pre-summary evidence before issuing a notice against Bansuri Swaraj. Jain accused Swaraj of making defamatory remarks during a TV interview on 5 October 2023, falsely claiming Rs 3 crores and 1.8 kgs of gold and 133 gold coins were recovered from his house, which was heard by ACJM Neha Mittal. Jain, a complainant, has been falsely accused of corruption and fraud by the Enforcement Directorate, causing irreversible damage to his reputation as a husband, father, brother, friend, and commoner —*ANI*

M'rashtra village passes resolution to use ballot papers

PUNE, 10 DEC

Kolewadi gram sabha in Maharashtra's Satara district has resolved to conduct future elections on ballot papers, becoming the second village in the state to pass a resolution against EVMs. The village, located in the Karad assembly constituency, was previously represented by Congress leader Prithviraj Chavan, who lost the election to BJP candidate Atul Bhosale by 39,355 votes. A resolution in Solapur's Malshiras constituency was passed after villagers from Markadwadi questioned the credibility of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs). On 2 December, villagers passed a resolution demanding ballot papers for upcoming elections, expressing surprise at Prithviraj Chavan's unsuccessful lead in Kolewadi assembly elections. A Gram Sevak also confirmed the passing of the resolution. Satara district collector plans to take action receiving the resolution —*PTI*

Lalu backs Didi as INDIA bloc leader, sparks rift

His move has sparked opposition within Cong-RJD alliance

PATNA, 10 DEC

Tensions have surfaced between the Congress and the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) alliance in Bihar, with RJD leader Lalu Prasad Yadav endorsing West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for a leadership role in the opposition INDIA bloc. This statement has raised eyebrows within the coalition ahead of the upcoming Assembly polls.

Responding affirmatively to questions from reporters about Banerjee's desire to lead the opposition alliance, Prasad asserted, "Yes, she should lead. The Congress' reservations amount to nothing. Mamata should be given the leadership role."

This declaration follows comments by All India Congress Committee (AICC) secretary Shahnawaz Alam, who indicated that the Congress was unwilling to play the "little brother" role in the Mahagathbandhan, Bihar's version of the INDIA bloc. Addressing a Congress event in Khagaria, Alam stated, "In politics, nobody is a big brother or a little brother," emphasising the need for seat allocation based on each party's previous performance in elections. The backdrop to this assertion is the contrasting electoral performances of the RJD and Congress in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. The RJD secured just four of the 23 seats it contested, while the Congress won three of its nine. Alam's remarks also hinted at frustrations over the RJD's independent candidacies, which have complicated dynamics within the alliance.

Congress legislative party leader Shakil Ahmed Khan responded to Prasad's comments, questioning their seriousness and pointing out that any leadership changes should be discussed formally in INDIA bloc meetings. "Lalu ji is known to say lots of things casually," Khan remarked, challenging the implications of Prasad's statements.

He defended Alam's position by asserting the Congress's improved performance warranted a stronger claim to seats in the upcoming elections. Alam also added to the tensions with a pointed remark referencing the recent wedding of industrialist Mukesh Ambani's son that was attended by both Prasad and Banerjee, implicitly suggesting that differences in priorities could be contributing to the growing rift. As the Bihar assembly elections approach, the unity of the alliance remains uncertain amidst these leadership tensions. —*PTI*

Lalu Yadav said that Congress' reservations amount to nothing. Mamata should be given the leadership role PHOTO: PTI

Nitish's yatra a ploy to ogle at women: Lalu

RJD president Lalu Prasad has sparked controversy with his remarks about Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's upcoming 'Mahila Samvad Yatra', suggesting it was merely an opportunity to "ogle at women." His comments have drawn strong backlash from leaders of the ruling BJP and JD(U), who accused him of disrespecting women. Deputy CM Samrat Choudhary described Prasad's mindset as "sick," while Bihar BJP president Dilip Jaiswal condemned the remark for insulting women. Union Minister Giriraj Singh expressed his disgust, labelling Lalu a "selfish man."

AAP convenor Arvind Kejriwal and wife Sunita break bread with an auto driver at the latter's home in East Delhi PHOTO: PTI

Kejri announces ₹10L insurance for Delhi auto drivers

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

Ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections, AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday announced Rs 10 lakh insurance for the city's auto drivers.

Kejriwal, who had lunch with the family members of an auto driver in Kondli constituency, also promised Rs 1 lakh as assistance to the auto drivers for the marriage of their daughters.

The former Delhi chief minister said Rs 2,500 would be given twice yearly as uniform allowance to auto drivers. He also assured their children of free coaching and the relaunching of the 'PoochO' app. The app allows people to access the database developed by the Delhi Integrated Multi-Model Transit System of registered auto drivers' mobile numbers and call them up to book a ride. Meanwhile, BJP on Tuesday issued chargesheets against 10 AAP MLAs, accusing them of non-performance and claiming they face strong anti-incumbency in their respective constituencies.

Leader of Opposition in outgoing Assembly Vijender Gupta, who heads the BJP's chargesheet committee, said the AAP dropped its 18 sitting MLAs in its second list of 20 candidates announced on Monday. Senior AAP leader Sanjay Singh accused the Election Commission of "colluding with the BJP" as he reiterated his party's claims of deletion of voters' names from electoral rolls ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections. —*PTI*

Merchant Shipping Bill introduced in Lok Sabha

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

- Saugata Roy of the TMC said the proposed legislation will only help hand over more powers to the bureaucracy

A bill which seeks to set up a body to hold regulatory and oversight functions relating to security of vessels and port facilities was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday with some opposition members questioning the legislative competence of the government in bringing the measure.

There was a brief lull in the din created by the opposition over Adani and other issues when the Merchant Shipping Bill was being introduced by Union minister Sarbananda Sonowal.

Opposing the bill at the introductory stage, Manish Tewari (Cong) said the government lacked legislative competence to legislate on merchant shipping as the subject has no direct entry in the central or concurrent list on which the Union (central government) can bring laws.

Saugata Roy of the TMC said the proposed legislation will only help hand over more powers to the bureaucracy.

He said it will only hinder and not develop merchant shipping in the country.

After the opposition members had spoken on the bill, the House saw renewed sloganeering by opposition.

Sonowal asserted that the bill has ben brought as per constitutional provisions and has been vetted by two law ministry departments -- legal affairs and legislative. —*PTI*

ADANI SAGA CONTINUES

I have never met Adani, says TN CM

CHENNAI, 10 DEC

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Tuesday said he never met industrialist Gautam Adani and sought to know if the BJP and its ally, the PMK, were prepared for a joint parliamentary committee (JPC) probe on the Adani issue.

Responding to a question raised by PMK leader GK Mani in the Assembly, Stalin said he had no connection whatsoever with the industrialist whom the PMK and the BJP were spreading a 'misinformation' campaign that he had links. "Electricity Minister Senthil Balaji has already explained in a detailed manner. I and Adani have no ties at all. Are you prepared for a JPC probe on the issue," Stalin asked, pointing at Mani.

The Congress and some other opposition parties have been demanding a JPC probe following the indictment of Adani and other company officials in a US court over bribery allegations.

Initially, Assembly Speaker M Appavu declined to allow Mani to raise the issue. However, the PMK legislator insisted that the Adani indictment was a serious issue and that the chief minister should himself clarify his position.

The Chief Minister said Mani and his party leaders have been speaking on this subject outside the Assembly too. —*PTI*

Oppn protests with 'jholas' in Parliament

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

PHOTO: PTI

Several Opposition MPs on Tuesday demonstrated over the Adani issue in Parliament premises, carrying 'jholas' (bags) with caricatures of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and billionaire Gautam Adani printed on it and 'Modi Adani Bhai Bhai' written on the obverse side.

This is the latest in the series of unusual protests led by the Congress daily ahead of the sitting of Parliament in the morning.

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, MPs from the Congress, DMK, JMM, Left, among others, protested in front of the Makar Dwar steps. They were carrying dark blue 'jholas' with caricatures of Modi and Adani printed on one side and 'Modi Adani Bhai Bhai' written on the obverse side of the bag. They raised slogans against collusion between Modi and Adani demanding a Joint Parliamentary Committee probe. —*PTI*

NO RELIEF FOR MANIPUR

Hundreds poured onto the streets in Manipur to protest against the ongoing violence and reimposition of AFSPA in parts of the state, on Tuesday. They also demanded justice against the killings of six people, including three children, in Jiribam district by suspected Kuki militants last month PHOTO: PTI

Hundreds protest in Delhi against atrocities on B'desh Hindus

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

Hundreds of people from various organisations, including the RSS, held a protest march at Chanakyapuri here against alleged atrocities and human rights violations against Hindus and other minorities in Bangladesh.

Security was stepped up outside the Bangladesh High Commission, which is in the area, in view of a protest march.

The protesters, who came from all walks of life, were carrying placards demanding the United Nations Human Rights Council's in the matter. They also called upon Bangladesh to stop the alleged Hindu genocide in the country.

There has been allegations of over 200 attacks on Hindus in 50-odd districts of Bangladesh since the fall of the Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government on 5 August

People protest rally against alleged atrocities on Bangladeshi Hindus in Ahmedabad, on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

Leader Sunil Ambekar said the Indian government should take "more concrete steps" to stop the atrocities against Hindus in Bangladesh, and also speak to other countries for this purpose. —*PTI*

Cybercrimes new threat to human rights: Murmu

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

PHOTO: PTI

The human rights discourse so far has been centred on the "human agency" as the violator is assumed to be a human, but with artificial intelligence entering our lives, the "culprit could be a non-human" but an intelligent agent, President Droupadi Murmu said on Tuesday.

Addressing an event hosted by the NHRC here to mark Human Rights Day, the president also underlined cyber crimes and climate change as "new threats" to human rights. Human Rights Day is observed on December 10 every year to commemorate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1948.

"Human rights are under assault. Tens of millions are mired in poverty, hunger, poor health and education systems that have not yet fully recovered from the Covid-19 pandemic. Global inequalities are running rampant. Conflicts are intensifying. International law is wilfully ignored," Guterres said in his message, which was also displayed on a screen. —*PTI*

'FRIENDSHIP HIGHER THAN MOUNTAINS'

Rajnath meets Putin, seeks S-400 missiles

MOSCOW, 10 DEC

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh met Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on Tuesday and the two leaders noted that the India-Russia partnership holds immense potential and combined efforts will pave the way for "remarkable outcomes".

He also pressed Russia to expedite the supply of two remaining units of S-400 Triumf surface-to-air missile systems as he held wide-ranging talks with his Russian counterpart Andrey Belousov in Moscow.

There has been a delay in supply of the remaining units in view of the Ukraine conflict.

Russian President Vladimir Putin with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in Moscow on Tuesday PHOTO: ANI

According to the defence ministry, Singh, in the meeting, said, "Friendship between our countries is higher than the highest mountain and deeper than the deepest ocean." The defence minister conveyed to Putin that India has always stood by its Russian friends and will continue to do so in future.

Singh also conveyed warm greetings of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to President Putin. "Rajnath Singh discussed various issues of bilateral defence cooperation," the defence ministry said in a statement. "Both leaders expressed that partnership between both countries holds immense potential and combined efforts will pave the way for remarkable outcomes," it said.

Singh called on Putin after co-chairing the 21st session of the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military and Military Cooperation along with his Russian counterpart Andrey Belousov. The Indian defence minister is on a three-day visit to Russia. —*PTI*

MP ex-serviceman kills wife and shoots himself

MADHYA PRADESH, 10 DEC

An ex-serviceman allegedly killed his wife and then committed suicide by turning his licensed pistol on himself after a dispute in Madhya Pradesh's Morena city early Tuesday morning, police said. A man killed himself and his two teenage sons while they were lying on a bed at home, but they managed to escape by running out. Devendra Singh, 45, who retired as a hawaldar five years ago, was financially sound. Singh, a security guard in Dholpur, Rajasthan, was allegedly shot dead by his wife Madhuri, 43, after a dispute. Singh's sons escaped a warehouse, bolting the door and reporting it to their maternal uncle. —*PTI*

PHOTO: X

US citizen detained over banned satellite phone

UTTARAKHAND, 10 DEC

Security officials at Jolly Grant Airport in Dehradun arrested an American citizen after discovering a banned satellite phone during routine CISF (Central Industrial Security Force) security checks. The arrest took place on Monday as the individual was preparing to board a flight to Delhi. An American national was arrested in India for allegedly possessing a satellite phone during a security screening. The phone was seized during a flight to Delhi, prompting authorities to take action. The man, who entered India on an E-tourist visa, was staying with a friend in Rishikesh before the airport. India's strict regulations on satellite phone usage are causing concern due to their use for secure communication and public safety, and a man is under investigation for his intentions. —*ANI*

Antioch patriot ends Kerala visit amid Syria crisis

KOCHI, 10 DEC

The Patriarch of Antioch, Ignatius Aphrem II, who arrived in Kochi on December 7 for a 10-day visit to Kerala, cut his visit short on Tuesday due to the "events" in Syria and departed for its capital, Damascus. Ignatius Aphrem II, the Patriarch of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church, expressed hope for peace and harmony in Syria before heading to Damascus. He praised India's peace and harmony during conflict, and expressed appreciation for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government, as well as the Kerala government led by Pinarayi Vijayan. He arrived in Kerala, offered prayers at the epitome of Catholicos Baselios Thomas I, attended a Mass, met with the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church's episcopal Synod. —*PTI*

Low-intensity blast outside Gurugram pub, suspect held

GURUGRAM, 10 DEC

A low-intensity explosion occurred outside a night club in Sector 29, Gurugram, in the early hours of Tuesday and a man who allegedly hurled the bombs was caught at the scene, police said. A man, Sachin, was arrested after throwing two "sutli bombs" at Human Night Club. The incident occurred around 5.15am, and a scooter was damaged. Sachin, in an inebriated state, planned to throw more bombs but was stopped by police. A bomb disposal team from Gurugram Police was called, and they recovered two live "sutli bombs" and a country-made weapon from his possession. Sachin is under investigation by the National Investigation Agency, Crime Unit, and SWAT teams, while being interrogated by the Crime Branch and STF teams of Gurugram Police. —*PTI*

Mumbai bus crash toll rises to 7; driver held

Police say driver had no experience of driving EVs; 42 injured & 22 vehicles damaged

MUMBAI, 10 DEC

Police have arrested the driver of a Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) bus involved in an accident here, which claimed seven lives and left 42 others injured, and booked him for 'culpable homicide not amounting to murder', officials said on Tuesday.

As many as 22 vehicles were damaged in the incident which took place at around 9.30pm on Monday on the SG Barve Marg in Kurla (West), they said.

The bus BEST hit several vehicles and pedestrians following which the driver, identified as Sanjay More, was detained. They said he had no experience of driving electric vehicles.

An official on Tuesday said the driver has been placed under arrest and was sent to police custody till 21 December.

An eyewitness to the BEST bus crash in Mumbai said the bus swerved over a stretch of 200 metres before hitting several vehicles and pedestrians.

The injured people were undergoing treatment in various medical facilities, including Bhabha Hospital, Sion Hospital and Seven Hills Hospital, the official said, adding the condition of some of them was critical.

The injured included four police personnel, who were on bandobast duty at the time of the incident. Their condition was stable, he said.

People gather near the wreckage of vehicles after a bus rammed into pedestrians as well as vehicles in Mumbai PHOTO: PTI

The driver was taken to a hospital for a medical test. His blood samples were also collected to examine whether he was under the influence of alcohol, the official said.

Police suspect the driver lost control over the wheels as the bus brakes failed, but it will be ascertained by experts, the official said. BEST said "as per the initial information, the driver lost control of the bus".

- Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis ordered immediate financial assistance of Rs 5 lakh each to the families of the deceased in the Kurla bus accident

The bus, after ploughing through pedestrians and vehicles in Kurla (West), entered into a residential society, Buddha Colony, and came to a halt, officials said on Monday.

The bus was a 12-metre-long electric vehicle manufactured by Hyderabad-based Olectra Greentech and it had been taken by BEST on wet lease, an official earlier said.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis ordered immediate financial assistance of Rs 5 lakh each to the families of the deceased in the Kurla bus accident, the Maharashtra Chief Minister Office (CMO) said on Tuesday. —*PTI*

20-year-old left for 1st day at new job, never to return

MUMBAI, 10 DEC

PHOTO: X

When 20-year-old Afreen Shah left home to start her first day of a new job on Monday, little did her father know that it would be the last time he would see her alive.

Afreen was one of the seven persons mowed down by a BEST bus that rammed into pedestrians and vehicles on the SG Barve Road in Kurla (West) on Monday night. Abdul Salim Shah last spoke to his daughter when she was struggling to get an autorickshaw to return home after her first day at a new job with a private company.

Shah advised Afreen to walk towards the highway to get an autorickshaw. It was the last time he spoke to his daughter. "It was her first day at work at a new company. After work, she reached Kurla railway station, from where she called me at 9.09 pm saying she was not getting an autorickshaw for Shivaji Nagar," he said. "I told her to walk towards the highway and get an autorickshaw. But, at 9.54 pm, I got a call from my daughter's phone, and it was a staffer from Bhabha Hospital," Shah said.

He rushed to the hospital and found Afreen's body in the casualty ward. —*PTI*

185-YEAR-OLD MOSQUE RAZED

The Fatehpur district administration in Uttar Pradesh used bulldozers to demolish part of the 185-year-old Noori Masjid on Tuesday, citing encroachment and obstruction to the Banda-Bahraich Highway. Police said that despite receiving notices, the mosque committee did not remove the alleged encroachment PHOTO: PTI

Kuwait bank alleges ₹700cr loan default by Kerala nurses

T'PURAM, 10 DEC

PHOTO: FACEBOOK, GULF BANK

A prominent Kuwait-based bank has filed complaints with police stations across Kerala, alleging that over 1,400 individuals, predominantly nurses, defaulted on substantial loans totaling approximately Rs 700 crore. The Gulf Bank KSCP lodged the complaints after many of these defaulters returned to India or moved to other countries, prompting police action that has resulted in 10 FIRs being registered statewide.

The complaints were spearheaded by Mohammed Abdul Vassey Kamran, the bank's Deputy General Manager, with eight cases registered in Ernakulam rural, one in Ernakulam city, and another in Kottayam. The charges include various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), notably 406 and 420, which pertain to criminal breach of trust and cheating.

According to Advocate Thomas J Anakkallunkal, who represents the bank legally, each defaulter received loans ranging from Rs 75 lakhs to one crore. Most loans were taken during the Covid-19 pandemic, with nurses working in government hospitals in Kuwait using salary certificates to secure funding.

Allegedly, the defaulters initially borrowed small amounts, repaying them promptly to establish trust. They later acquired larger loans, making a few payments before leaving Kuwait under the guise of taking leave, with no intention of returning.

The Kuwait bank has engaged the Indian Home Department regarding the issue, emphasizing that the bank possesses the passport details and home addresses of the accused, facilitating their traceability in Kerala. —*PTI*

Madras orders release of unjustly held prisoners

CHENNAI, 10 DEC

The Madras High Court has asked its Registrar General to ensure that the process for release of prisoners languishing unnecessarily in jails was accelerated by completing the formalities.

Filing of necessary petitions through the Legal Aid Services before the competent court should also be ensured.

A division bench comprising Justices SM Subramaniam and M Jyothiraman passed the order on Monday on proceedings initiated by it.

In its order, the bench said the Additional Public Prosecutor submitted that as per the prison department, 153 remand prisoners were still languishing in various prisons across Tamil Nadu even after grant of bail.

As many as 22 convict prisoners were also in prison after suspension of sentence by the appellate courts. The Additional public prosecutor also submitted that there was delay in receiving the bail orders from the District courts. He submitted that as far as the High Court was concerned, order copies were received immediately, the bench added.

- The bench said the Additional Public Prosecutor submitted that as per the prison department, 153 remand prisoners were still languishing in jails

The bench said it was necessary to implead the Registrar General to ensure that the process in this regard were accelerated to ensure that the prisoners languishing unnecessarily in prisons stand released by completing the formalities and by filing necessary petitions through the Legal Aid Services before the competent Court. The bench said the Member Secretary, Legal Services Authority submitted that swift action will be taken in coordination with the High Court Registry and necessary legal aid assistance will be provided to the prisoners. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

DHARMENDRA & 2 OTHERS SUMMONED IN FRAUD CASE

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

A Delhi court has summoned veteran Bollywood actor Dharmendra and two others in a cheating case related to the Garam Dharam Dhaba franchise, according to the complainant's lawyer.

Judicial Magistrate Yashdeep Chahal passed the order against the actor on a complaint filed by Delhi businessman, Sushil Kumar, who alleged that he was lured into investing in the franchise, the lawyer said. The evidence indicates that the accused induced the complainant in furtherance of their common intent and the offence of cheating are duly disclosed, the judge said in an ord on 5 December. —*PTI*

RG-KAR: SC URGES NTF TO FOCUS ON MEDICAL STAFF SAFETY

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

The Supreme Court of India has directed involved parties to submit their recommendations on preventing gender-based violence and establishing safety protocols for doctors and medical staff in hospitals. This comes in the wake of the tragic rape and murder of a doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar appointed a national task force (NTF) on 20 August to develop strategies for the safety of medical professionals. The NTF is to present its report within 12 weeks of today's order.

During the hearing, the Chief Justice indicated that the case would be reviewed again in the week beginning 17 March 2025, although he welcomed requests for an earlier hearing if necessary due to delays in the trial. —*PTI*

14 get bail in Ayodhya communal violence

MUMBAI, 10 DEC

PHOTO: WIKPEDIA

The Bombay High Court has granted bail to 14 Muslim men arrested for their alleged involvement in the communal violence in Mira Road on the eve of the consecration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, noting that their further detention appeared "tenuous".

A single bench of Justice NJ Jamadar on Monday noted that prima facie, it cannot be inferred that there was a premeditated conspiracy to assault people part of the convoy taken out to celebrate the temple consecration ceremony in January this year.

The bench also highlighted that no CCTV footage showed the accused persons assaulting the complainant or anyone else.

The court said the probe in the case was complete, and since the accused have roots in the society, the possibility of fleeing from justice was remote.

The bench also took note of the fact that the accused have been in custody since January, and it appears extremely unlikely that the trial will be concluded soon. Hence, further detention would be unwarranted. —*PTI*

AMID WAR

Family awaits return of duo trapped in Russia

THRISSUR, 10 DEC

Binil TB, an electrician from Thrissur, left for Russia seven months ago, hoping to secure a better job and higher wages while his wife was expecting their first child. Sadly, he couldn't share the joy of his son's birth four months ago.

Stranded somewhere in a war-torn region of Ukraine now under Russian control, Binil, 32, and his relative Jain TK, 27, lost their mobile phones and other valuables, further compounding their hardships. They have been seeking help from authorities for their return, their relatives said.

Binil's wife Joicy John has been knocking on the doors of the authorities in an attempt to bring them back home. She has been overwhelmed with anxiety after receiving Binil's last audio message on Monday.

In the message, he revealed that Russian authorities had ordered him and his cousin-in-law, Jain, to report to the war front.

Binil and Jain are ITI mechanical diploma holders and had gone to Russia on 4 April, to work as electricians and plumbers in Russia PHOTO: X

Reports that Binil is currently in an area under relentless airstrikes has deepened Joicy's worries. "I have lost all peace of mind as it has been seven months since they left," said Joicy, a nurse at a private medical college in Thrissur.

Joicy has approached the state government, Union Minister and Thrissur MP Suresh Gopi, all other MPs from the state and the Indian Embassy in Moscow, to ensure the early release of her husband and relative from the war zone. "The embassy officials have said they are awaiting communication from the Russian authorities," she said.

"The embassy officials have said they are awaiting communication from the Russian authorities," Joicy said, expressing frustration over the month-long wait. "I have lost all peace of mind as it has been since seven months they had left," Joicy, a nurse at a private medical college in Thrissur, currently on maternity leave, told PTI. Binil and Jain are ITI mechanical diploma holders and had gone to Russia on 4 April, hoping to work as electricians, and plumbers in Russia. —*PTI*

Kerala HC bans political flexes near temple premises

KOCHI, 10 DEC

- The ruling came during a hearing of a plea initiated by the High Court on its own, based on a complaint against a flex board put up at Alappuzha temple

The Kerala High Court on Tuesday said flex boards praising or congratulating the state government and the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) are not permitted in temples as devotees go there to see God and not the faces of the Chief Minister, MLA or Board members.

"These kinds of activities cannot be permitted. Do not be under the impression that you (TDB) are the owner of the temples. The Board is a trustee which manages the temples under it," the bench said.

The ruling by a bench of Justices Anil K Narendran and Muralee Krishna S came during a hearing of a plea initiated by the High Court on its own, based on a complaint against a flex board put up at the Thuravoor Mahakshetram (temple) in Alappuzha district.

The bench said that the flex board, carrying photographs of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, state Devaswom Minister VN Vasavan, the TDB president and the MLA of the constituency, congratulated the LDF and the Board for permitting annadanam for Sabarimala pilgrims during the ongoing pilgrimage season. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

87,000 evacuated in Philippines after volcano erupts

MANILA, 10 DEC

Approximately 87,000 people are being evacuated from a central Philippine region following a brief eruption of Mount Kanlaon, which released a towering ash plume and superheated gas and debris down its slopes. The latest eruption on Negros Island raised the alert level, indicating the possibility of more explosive eruptions, although no immediate casualties have been reported. Volcanic ash from the eruption affect-ed a wide area, including Antique province, obscuring visibility and posing health risks, according to Phil-ippine chief volcanologist Teresito Bacolcol. Six domestic flights and one Singapore-bound flight were cancelled, while two local flights were diverted due to the eruption. Urgent mass evacuations are taking place, particularly in La Castellan. —*PTI*

Dissanayake to visit India from 15–17 Dec

COLOMBO, 10 DEC

In his first overseas visit after assuming office in September, Sri Lankan President Anura Kumara Dissanayake will undertake a three-day visit to India from 15 December, his government announced on Tuesday. During his visit, Dissanayake will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Droupadi Murmu, Cabinet spokesman and Minister of Health Nalinda Jayathissa said. Dissanayake will be accompanied by Foreign Minister Vijitha Herath and Deputy Minister of Finance Anil Jayantha Fernando, said Jayathissa. The invitation to visit New Delhi was extended by the External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who visited Colombo soon after Dissanayake's victory. —*PTI*

UK student kills woman to 'know what it feels like'

LONDON, 10 DEC

A 20-year-old criminology student, Nasen Saadi, is on trial for the alleged murder of a woman and the serious injury of another in a brutal knife attack at Bournemouth's Durley Chine Beach in September 2023. Prosecutors argue that Saadi's motive was to experience "what it would be like to take a life." Saadi, who had reportedly been planning the attack since April, chose Bournemouth after researching secluded beaches. On the night of the assault, victims Amie Gray, 34, and Leanne Miles, 38, were sitting by a fire on the beach, enjoying the full moon and chatting. According to witnesses, Saadi was seen "hovering at the edges of the promenade" before launching his attack. Gray suffered 10 stab wounds, including a fatal strike to her heart, and was declared dead at the scene. —*Agencies*

6 Guatemalans held for human smuggling

LAREDO, 10 DEC

Six Guatemalans are charged with human smuggling linked to a semi-trailer truck crash in Mexico in 2021 that killed more than 50 migrants. They were arrested in Guatemala and Texas on Monday, US and Guatemalan authorities announced on Monday. The truck had been packed with at least 160 migrants, many of them Guatemalans, when it crashed with a support for a pedestrian bridge in Tuxtla Gutierrez, the capital of the southern state of Chiapas. The arrests were announced on the three-year anniversary of the accident. The accused were charged with conspiracy, placing life in jeopardy, causing serious bodily injury, and re-sulting in death. The indictment charges them with conspiring to smuggle migrants from Guatemala through Mexico to the US for payment. —*PTI*

Israel pounds Syria as troops close in on Damascus

Tel Aviv bins reports of larger Israeli invasion as 'rumours'

DAMASCUS, 10 DEC

Israel carried out a wave of heavy airstrikes across Syria as its troops advanced deeper into the country, drawing to within 25km of the capital, a Syrian opposition war monitor said on Tuesday.

Damascus city and its suburbs took airstrikes on Monday overnight and into Tuesday. Photographs circu-lating online showed destroyed missile launchers, helicopters and warplanes.

There was no immediate comment from the insurgent groups – led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS – that have taken control of Damascus.

Israel had earlier seized a roughly 400-square-kilometre buffer zone inside Syria that had been estab-lished after the 1973 Mideast war, a move it said was taken to prevent attacks in the aftermath of the overthrow of President Bashar Assad.

Israel has also said it is striking suspected chemical weapons sites and heavy weapons to prevent them from falling into the hands of extremists. Israeli officials rarely acknowledge individual strikes.

Israel has a long history of seizing territory during wars with its neighbours and occupying it indefinitely, citing security concerns.

Reports said Israeli troops are advancing up the Syrian side of the border with Lebanon.

An Israeli military official said troops plan to seize a buffer zone inside Syria as well as "a few more points that have strategic meaning." Another official dismissed reports of a larger Israeli invasion as "rumours."

Meanwhile, the UK paused all decisions on Syrian asylum claims after the collapse of the Bashar al-Assad regime over the weekend, following which Prime Minister Keir Starmer called for peace and stabil-ity in the region. "We keep all country guidance relating to asylum claims under constant review, so we can respond to emerging issues," a statement said.

It came as Starmer announced a further GBP 11M in humanitarian aid for the victims of the Syrian con-flict. —*PTI*

Youths sit on a trash container as they watch an Israeli armored vehicle maneuver near the town of Majdal Shams in Syria PHOTO: PTI

TERROR TAG ON REBELS DOESN'T BAR TALKS: US

WASHINGTON, 10 DEC

The US State Department on Monday said it is not actively reviewing the "foreign terrorist organisation" designation of the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), the main Syrian rebel group that overthrew Bashar Assad's government this weekend.

It, however, said that even while it is in place, the label does not bar US officials from speaking with the group.

Meanwhile, Tulsi Gabbard, President-elect Donald Trump's pick to be director of national intelligence, on Monday met key Senators at Capitol Hill and supported the Republican leader's view on Syria. Hindu-American Gabbard, 43, who represented Hawaii in the House for eight years as a Democrat, said, "I stand in full support and wholeheartedly agree with the statements that President Trump has made over these last few days regarding Syria." —*PTI*

MYANMAR'S CIVIL WAR

The Arakan Army now controls the entire Myanmar-Bangladesh border. PHOTO: X@REAPROY

Myanmar–B'desh border in rebel hands

BANGKOK, 10 DEC

The Arakan Army, one of the most powerful ethnic minority armed groups battling Myanmar's army, has claimed the capture of the last army outpost in the strategic western town of Maungdaw, gaining full control of the 271km border with Bangladesh.

The capture makes the group's control of the northern part of Rakhine state complete and marks anoth-er advance in its bid for self-rule there.

Rakhine has become a focal point for Myanmar's nationwide civil war, in which pro-democracy guerrillas and ethnic minority armed forces seeking autonomy battle the country's military rulers, who took power in 2021 after the army ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi.

Khaing Thukha, a spokesperson for the Arakan Army, said on Monday that his group had seized the last remaining military outpost in Maungdaw on Sunday. Outpost commander Brig. Gen. Thurein Tun was captured while attempting to flee the battle, Thukha said.

The situation in Maungdaw could not be independently confirmed, with access to the internet and mo-bile phone services in the area mostly cut off. Myanmar's military government did not immediately comment.Maungdaw, about 400km southwest of Mandalay, Myanmar's second-largest city, has been the target of an Arakan Army offensive since June. The group captured Paletwa and Buthidaung, two other towns on the border with Bangladesh, earlier this year.

Since November 2023, the Arakan Army has gained control of 11 of Rakhine's 17 townships, along with one in neighbouring Chin state. —*PTI*

Netanyahu's trial on corruption begins

TEL AVIV, 10 DEC

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu takes to the stand on Tuesday in his long-running trial for alleged corruption. It is expected to be a weekslong spectacle that will draw unwelcome attention to his legal woes as he faces an international arrest warrant for war crimes and the fighting in Gaza continues.

It is the first time an Israeli prime minister will take the stand as a criminal defendant, an embarrassing milestone for a leader who has tried to cultivate an image as a sophisticated and respected statesman.

Netanyahu will answer during his court appearances to charges of fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in three separate cases. He is accused of accepting tens of thousands of dollars' worth of cigars and champagne from a billionaire Hollywood producer in exchange for assisting him with personal and business interests. He is also ac-cused of promoting advantageous regulation for media moguls in exchange for favourable coverage of himself and his family. Netanyahu denies wrongdoing. "Eight years I've waited for this day. Eight years I have waited to present the truth. Eight years I am waiting to knock down once and for all these deluded and absurd charges against me," Netanyahu said. —*PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

'FOLLOW HIS WAY'

Musk warns those opposing Trump

DES MOINES, 10 DEC

A week after President-elect Donald Trump's victory, Elon Musk said his political action committee would "play a significant role in primaries".

The billionaire responded to a report that he might fund challengers to GOP House members who do not support Trump's nominees. "How else? There is no other way," Musk wrote on X, which he rebranded after purchasing Twitter and moving to boost conservative voices, including his own.

During his recent visit to Capitol Hill, Musk and entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy delivered a warning to Republicans who don't go along with their plans to slash spending as part of Trump's proposed Department of Government Efficiency.

"Elon and Vivek talked about having a naughty list and a nice list for Congressmen and senators, and how we vote and how we're spending the American people's money," said Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, R-Ga. Trump's second term comes with the spectre of the world's richest man serving as his political enforcer.

Within Trump's team, there is a feeling that Musk not only supports Trump's agenda and Cabinet ap-pointments, but is intent on seeing them through to the point of pressuring Republicans who may be less devout.

One Trump adviser, speaking on condition of anonymity, noted Musk had come to enjoy his role on the campaign and that he clearly had the resources to stay involved. —*PTI*

Elon Musk PHOTO: ONEAI

India's Harmeet Dhillon is US' AAG for civil rights

WASHINGTON, 10 DEC

US President-elect Donald Trump has nominated Indian-American Harmeet K Dhillon for the position of Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights at the Department of Justice. Announcing her nomination on his social media platform, Trump praised Dhillon's commitment to civil liberties, highlighting her efforts against perceived censorship, her advocacy for religious freedoms during the Covid pandemic, and her litigation against corporate "woke" policies. Trump emphasised Dhillon's dedication to ensuring all legal votes are counted. —*PTI*

Taiwan wary as China deploys ships

TAIPEI, 10 DEC

Heightened Chinese military activity around Taiwan has been reported, although the specific intentions remain unclear. Taiwan's Defence Ministry announced on Tuesday that it detected a dozen Chinese naval vessels and 47 military aircraft over the past 24 hours. However, unlike previous drills, there have been no indications of live-fire exercises.

Taiwan's military is on alert for potential Chinese exercises following a recent trip by President Lai Ching-te to Hawaii and Guam, an American territory. Officials in Taiwan, without any formal announcement from China, are calling this activity "training." Lt. Gen. Hsieh Jih-sheng remarked at a news conference, "It's in the status of regular training... but such training can escalate to drills, and drills can escalate to war."

China regards Taiwan as part of its territory and is vehemently opposed to its official interactions with other nations, particularly the United States.

President Lai engaged with US congressional leaders while in Guam last week.

In preparation for ongoing developments, Taiwan's military established an emergency response centre as Chinese naval activity surged and flight restrictions were announced across seven zones off China's eastern coast, lasting until Wednesday. —*PTI*

Taiwan's military established an emergency response centre as Chinese naval activity surged PHOTO: XX

Martial law: S Korea seeks arrest of ex-defence minister

SEOUL, 10 DEC

South Korean prosecutors are pursuing the arrest of former Defence Minister Kim Yong Hyun amid alle-gations of collusion with President Yoon Suk Yeol in the recent imposition of martial law, which lasted six hours—the first such action in over 40 years.

Both men are under investigation for potential rebellion and other charges related to this unprecedented decree that spurred significant public protests. The Justice Ministry has banned Yoon and eight associ-ates from leaving the country, marking the first time a sitting president in South Korea has faced such restrictions. The Seoul Central District Court is set to review prosecutors' request for Kim's arrest warrant. —*PTI*

Brazil's Lula in ICU after surgery to drain hemorrhage

SAO PAULO, 10 DEC

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is recovering in an intensive-care unit after undergoing sur-gery for an intracranial hemorrhage, the Sirio-Libanes hospital said in a statement in the early hours of Tuesday.

The procedure was performed after the 79-year-old leftist leader felt headaches doctors believed re-sulted from a fall at home in October.

The hospital said Lula, who travelled from the capital Brasilia to be treated 1,000 kilometres south in Sao Paulo, is "well, under monitoring in an ICU bed" after the bleeding was drained.

Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Brazil's presidency has yet to issue any comment.

Lula cancelled a trip to Russia for a BRICS summit after the accident, his office said at the time. It left him with a cut visible on the back of his head, slightly above his neck. Sirio-Libanes said a press conference will be held at 9 am local time (12 am GMT) to discuss the surgery. —*PTI*

Ivy League graduate held in US CEO's murder

WASHINGTON DC, 10 DEC

Authorities have arrested Luigi Nicholas Mangione, a 26-year-old IVY League graduate, and charged him with the murder of UnitedHealthcare's CEO, Brian Thompson, in a shocking incident that has captivated the public. A key break in the case occurred when a McDonald's customer in Altoona, Pennsylvania, rec-ognised Mangione, who was found with a gun, mask, and writings linked to the ambush.

Mangione, who comes from a prominent Maryland real estate family, was discovered in a McDonald's wearing a blue medical mask and using a laptop. Officers quickly identified him after he lowered his mask. They found a black, 3D-printed pistol and a silencer in his possession, along with a fraudulent ID matching one used to check into a New York City hostel.

Luigi Nicholas Mangione PHOTO: X@JOSHUAMLINEK

Investigators revealed that Mangione expressed animosity towards corporate America in a detailed handwritten document. His family expressed shock at his arrest and offered condolences to Thompson's family. Thompson was shot last Wednesday near a hotel where UnitedHealth Group held its annual investor conference. The incident has spurred companies to reassess security measures amid growing concerns in the business and health insurance sectors. —*PTI*

AS POPULATION DIPS

Tokyo to start 4-day work week

TOKYO, 10 DEC

To address Japan's aging population and record-low fertility rates, Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike an-nounced that the city will implement a four-day workweek for metropolitan government employees starting in April 2025. This initiative aims to encourage couples to spend more quality time together and help reverse the nation's declining birthrate.

Speaking at the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly, Koike stressed the importance of flexible work arrange-ments that allow employees to better balance their careers with personal milestones like childbirth and childcare.

Under the new policy, employees will have the option to take three days off per week.

In ad-dition, parents of elementary school children will be allowed to exchange part of their salary for the abil-ity to leave work early.

Japan's fertility rate fell to a historic low of 1.2 children per woman last year, far below the 2.1 replace-ment rate necessary for a stable population. With only 727,277 births registered in 2023, the country faces significant demographic challenges. Factors such as Japan's culture of overtime work and gender disparities in labor force participation have been identified as contributing to the nation's declining birthrate.

The four-day workweek is seen as a potential solution to these issues, offering employees more time for family life. Trials conducted in 2022 by 4 Day Week Global showed positive outcomes, including reduced stress, better work-life balance, and improved health among participants. —*Salar News with Agencies*

The four-day workweek is seen as a potential solution to Japan's record-low fertility rate PHOTO: PIXABAY

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Rupee settles all-time low at 84.85 against USD

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

The rupee settled for the day on a flat note higher by just 1 paisa at 84.85 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, a tad above its all-time low level, as change of guard at the Reserve Bank of India raised expectations of a shift in the central bank's monetary policy. The government on Monday appointed Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra as the 26th Governor of the Reserve Bank of India. Forex traders said markets now expect a rate cut in the upcoming monetary policy in February. While a weak tone in the domestic markets and a surge in the US dollar index further pressurised the rupee. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 84.80 and touched the lowest level of 84.86 against the greenback during intra-day trade. —*PTI*

Gold climbs ₹820 to ₹79,780/ 10g; silver jumps ₹1K

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

Gold prices climbed Rs 820 to Rs 79,780 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday due to fresh buying by jewellers and stockists amid a firm global trend, according to local marketmen. The bullion prices boosted after China indicated easier credit and other forms of stimulus for its sluggish economy and the resumption of gold purchases by the People's Bank of China (PBoC), traders said. The yellow metal of 99.9 per cent purity closed at Rs 78,960 per 10 grams on Monday. Silver jumped Rs 1,000 to Rs 94,850 per kg on Tuesday. The white metal had settled at Rs 93,850 per kg in the previous session. The price of gold of 99.5 per cent purity advanced Rs 820 to Rs 79,380 per 10 grams against the previous close of Rs 78,560 per 10 grams.—*PTI*

Boeing lays off 900 employees in the US

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

Boeing has laid off hundreds of additional employees in Washington state and California as part of planned cuts that will eventually reduce the company's workforce by about 17,000. Nearly 400 Boeing employees were laid off in Washington state and more than 500 in California, news outlets reported Monday. The aerospace giant announced previously it would reduce its workforce by 10 per cent in the coming months as it tries to recover from financial and regulatory troubles and a strike by its machinists that lasted almost two months. CEO Kelly Ortberg has said the strike did not cause the layoffs, which he said was the result of overstaffing. —*PTI*

Walmart under fire over lord Ganesha underwear

ARKANSAS, 10 DEC

US retailer Walmart faced sharp criticism for selling slippers, undergarments, and swimsuits featuring images of Lord Ganesha, sparking outrage among the Hindu community. Social media users accused Walmart of cultural insensitivity, calling the use of sacred Hindu imagery on such items deeply disrespectful. The Canadian Hindu Chamber of Commerce and the Hindu American Foundation condemned the act, urging Walmart to remove the products and respect cultural sentiments. One post read, "Disrespect is not fashionable. Hindu deities hold profound spiritual significance and should not be trivialized." Following the backlash, Walmart removed the items from its online catalog. However, users warned brands to prioritise cultural respects. —*PTI*

Equity MFs inflow drops 14% to ₹35K cr in Nov

Overall the mutual fund industry witnessed an inflow of Rs 60,295 crore in the month

Overall, 9 out of 16 debt mutual fund categories recorded net inflows in November PHOTO: PIXABAY

MUMBAI, 10 DEC

Equity mutual funds witnessed an inflow of Rs 35,943 crore in November, marking a drop of 14 per cent on a month-on-month basis, amid heightened volatility in stock markets driven by various macroeconomic factors, geopolitical events and US election results.

Despite this, it marked the 45th consecutive month of net inflows into equity-oriented funds, reflecting the growing popularity of mutual funds among investors, according to data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) released on Tuesday.

Moreover, monthly contributions from the Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) remained flat at Rs 25,320 crore last month against Rs 25,323 crore in October.

"There was heightened volatility due to various macroeconomic factors, geopolitical events and the US election results. This resulted in investors opting for a wait & watch approach while allocating larger amounts and thus decline in lumpsum flows including flattish SIP numbers for November 2024," Akhil Chaturvedi, CBO, Motilal Oswal AMC, said.

Overall, the mutual fund industry experienced an inflow of Rs 60,295 crore in the month under review, which was way lower than Rs 2.4 lakh crore in October. This could be due to a huge decline in inflows in debt funds to Rs 12,915 crore in November from Rs 1.57 lakh crore in the preceding month.

Despite the decline, the industry's net assets under management rose to Rs 68.08 lakh crore last month from Rs 67.25 lakh crore in October.

Inflows into large-cap funds declined 26 per cent to Rs 2,548 crore in November from Rs 3,452 crore in the preceding month, while mid and small cap funds registered month-on-month growth of 4.3 per cent to Rs 4,883 crore and 9 per cent to Rs 4,112 crore, respectively.

The month saw 18 new fund offerings (NFOs) collecting Rs 4,052 crore while October saw 29 NFOs garnering Rs 6,078 crore. Of this, new index funds launched in November were 10 as compared to 17 launched in October, Mayukh Datta, Chief Business Officer, ITI Mutual Fund, said.

With regards to debt-oriented funds, Deepak Ramaraju, Senior Fund Manager, Shriram AMC, said that the category saw a 92 per cent month-on month plunge in inflow to Rs 12,916 crore in November on the back of withdrawal from liquid funds due to tighter liquidity conditions and possible tax payments.

Overall, 9 out of 16 debt mutual fund categories recorded net inflows in November. Liquid funds experienced the highest outflows, amounting to Rs 1,779 crore. —*PTI*

CHALLENGES FOR RBI

Restoring inflation growth balance vital task, says Guv Das

MUMBAI, 10 DEC

Outgoing Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Tuesday that restoring inflation-growth balance is the most important task ahead of the central bank.

Addressing a press conference on his last day as the central bank chief, Das said his successor will have to navigate the changing world order, effectively deal with cyber threats, and focus on harnessing new technologies.

New Governor Sanjay Malhotra, he hoped, would carry forward RBI initiatives like CBDC and ULI, besides promoting financial inclusion. Listing out the issues before the central bank, Das said one of the most important tasks will be to restore the balance between inflation and growth.

The Indian economy is resilient and robust with capacity to deal with global spillovers very effectively, he said. The government has appointed Revenue Secretary Malhotra who will be taking over as the central bank chief on Wednesday. Das, said the coordination between the finance ministry and RBI has been at its best in the last six years. —*PTI*

Guv-designate says he will do what's best for economy

MUMBAI, 10 DEC

Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra on Tuesday said he will work to understand all perspectives and do what is best for the economy after he takes charge as the RBI Governor on 11 December.

Responding to reporters' queries outside the finance ministry, Malhotra said, "One has to understand the turf, all perspectives and do what's best for the economy."

Malhotra, 56, who is currently the Revenue Secretary in the Ministry of Finance, was on Monday evening named by the government to succeed Shaktikanta Das as the governor of the central bank.

A 1990-batch IAS officer of the Rajasthan cadre, Malhotra, has more than three decades of experience in public policy with expertise in areas like power, finance, and taxation. He takes guard at a time when the Indian economy is faced with the dual challenge of slowing growth rate and high inflation.

While Das kept benchmark interest rates unchanged for almost two years in a bid to control inflation, the incoming governor is said to be a team player who believes prices cannot be managed by RBI alone and the task needs government help as well. —*PTI*

Sensex, Nifty end flat amid volatility

MUMBAI, , 10 DEC

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed on a flat note on Tuesday amid a lacklustre trade, as investors preferred to stay on the sidelines in the absence of any fresh trigger.

Besides, a weak trend in European markets also impacted investors' sentiment, according to traders.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rises 1.59 points to close flat at 81,510.05. During the day, it climbed 217.88 points or 0.27 per cent to hit an intraday high of 81,726.34.

The NSE Nifty fell 8.95 points or 0.04 per cent to settle at 24,610.05. In the intraday trade, it slipped 108.35 points or 0.44 per cent to hit a low of 24,510.65.

"The domestic market concluded on a flat note, a rebound from the lows suggests buy-on-dip strategy... The broader market outperformed, maintaining its positive trend led by mid & small-caps. The IT index reached new highs in anticipation of improvement in US IT spending.

"Upcoming inflation data from the US and India are critical for insights into potential future rate cuts. India's CPI will serve as a key indicator of underlying earnings growth, which has been downgraded in H1FY25," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said.

From the 30-share pack, Bajaj Finserv, HCL Technologies, Infosys, State Bank of India, Bajaj Finance, ICICI Bank, Mahindra & Mahindra, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Titan were among the gainers.

Bharti Airtel, Adani Ports, Tech Mahindra, Reliance Industries, Axis Bank, Larsen & Toubro were the laggards.

In Asian markets, Tokyo, Shanghai, and Seoul settled higher, while Hong Kong ended in negative territory.

European markets were trading lower. The US markets closed in the red in overnight deals on Monday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude fell 0.17 per cent to USD 72.02 a barrel. —*PTI*

Bajaj Finserv, HCL Technologiesand Infosys are gainers PHOTO: PTI

India to continue resilient growth in 2025: S&P

S&P Global Ratings on Tuesday said the Indian economy is set for "resilient growth" in 2025 and projected inflation pressure to recede which will lead to "modest" easing of the monetary policy by the RBI.

In its India outlook for 2025, S&P also retained India's growth forecast for current fiscal at 6.8 per cent, followed by 6.9 per cent growth in 2025-26.

"The Indian economy is set for resilient growth in 2025 on the back of strong urban consumption, steady service sector growth and ongoing investment in infrastructure," Vishrut Rana, Economist at S&P Global Ratings, said.

We expect the central bank to ease monetary policy modestly during 2025 as inflationary pressures recede, Rana said. Last week, RBI retained benchmark interest rates at 6.5 per cent to control inflation but cut the cash reserve ratio (CRR) by 50 basis points to infuse liquidity into the system. India's economy grew 8.2 per cent in 2023-24.

It said the GDP growth print for fiscal Q2 (June-September 2024) was weaker than expected at 5.4 per cent.

The fiscal impulse was slower, and pockets of weakness such as the urban middle class held back. Manufacturing growth which puts some downside risk to our forecast of 6.8 per cent growth for fiscal 2025, it said. —*PTI*

CONTINUUM GREEN ENERGY, DAM CAPITAL ADVISORS FILE FOR IPO

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

Continuum Green Energy Ltd, an independent power producer (IPP), has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi for floating a Rs 3,650 crore IPO.

The proposed IPO is a combination of a fresh issue of equity shares valued Rs 1,250 crore and an Offer for Sale (OFS) of equity shares worth Rs 2,400 crore by promoter Continuum Green Energy Holdings Ltd, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) filed on Monday.

Arvind Bansal, Vikash Saraf, Continuum Green Energy Holdings Ltd, Continuum Energy Pte Ltd , Clean Joules Pte Ltd and Starlight Pacific Venture Pte Ltd are the promoters of the company.

Meanwhile, Investment bank DAM Capital Advisors has received Sebi's go ahead to float an IPO an update with the markets regulator showed on Tuesday.

It is solely an offer-for-sale (OFS) of 3.2 crore equity shares, with no fresh issue component, according to the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP). —*PTI*

No one was fired, says YesMadam post backlash

NOIDA, 10 DEC

Home salon services company YesMadam which faced outrage on social media after a claim surfaced that it had fired 100 employees for being stressed has later clarified on Tuesday that this was a fabricated scenario as part of a social media campaign to raise awareness about workplace stress.

"No one was fired at YesMadam," the company stated. "We apologise for any distress caused by our posts. We would never take such an inhuman step." Alongside the clarification, the company introduced a "de-stress leave policy" offering employees six days of paid leave and a complimentary home spa session for mental rejuvenation.

PHOTO: LINKEDIN

Everybody is curious to know what really happened at YesMadam. I am spilling the beans here. Yes, the survey did happen, in fact, I volunteered in the survey, and was part of the core team which gave birth to the idea of De-Stress Leaves. Moreover, the employees were taken into confidence, and we didn't send any emails, the screenshot which went viral was a planned move. Want to know why?

It was the need of the hour. Stress is not just limited to one office, one city, or one country, it's a universal problem which needs immediate attention. I have been reading on LinkedIn a lot about work-life balance, stress at work, and what not? But do you remember any recent breakthrough—or substantial development for the employees?

All of us together are responsible for it, we have made it a norm ki itna toh chalta hai, and "Aaj Bhot Stress Hai Yaar', has never been a genuine reason to take a day off, BUT NOT ANYMORE!

Were YesMadam employees really fired for being stressed?

Absolutely not

•They weren't fired; they were given a break to reset.
•They weren't let go; they were encouraged to release stress
•They weren't laid off; they were offered a chance to relax.
•They weren't sacked; they were urged to rest and recharged —*Agencies*

BREAKTHROUGH AFTER 30 YEARS

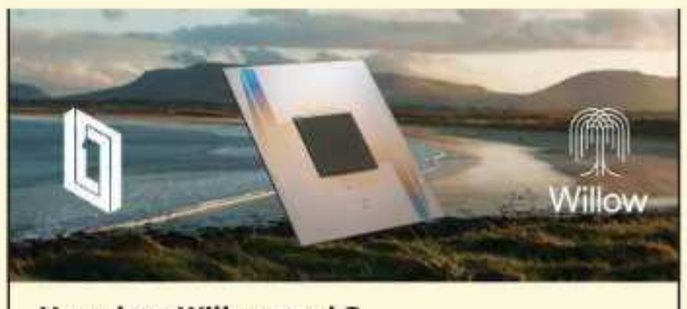
Google's Willow chip is faster than supercomputers

Google has developed a quantum chip called Willow, which can solve a problem in just 5 minutes while it would take classical supercomputers far longer than the universe's age. This cracks a 30-year-old challenge in quantum computing field.

Time to solve a problem:
World's fasted supercomputer:
10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 years

Google's Willow: 5 MINUTES

What is Willow? TYPE: QUANTUM CHIP



Core Innovations

Error Correction: Willow can reduce errors exponentially
Parallel Realities: Allows multiple calculations at once, speeding up complex tasks.

What is a quantum chip?

A quantum chip is a special type of computer chip designed to use the principles of quantum mechanics. A regular chip uses "bits" which can only be either a 0 or 1, while a qubit, used in quantum computers, can be a 0, 1, or a combination of both simultaneously.

How does Willow work?

Willow operates using superconducting transmon qubits, these are tiny electrical circuits which function at extremely low temperature (just above absolute zero). This reduces errors and they work as artificial atoms in a quantum state. Qubits are the fundamental unit of quantum computation. The chip has 105 qubits.

Real-World Impact

- **Medicine**: Design new drugs and treatments.
- **Battery Technology**: Develop better, longer-lasting batteries.
- **Fusion Energy**
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**: Push AI capabilities beyond current limits.
- It will solve logistic problems such as cargo freight distribution on aircraft.
- It will help route telecom signals throughout a national grid.

PHOTO: X

Afghanistan extend Trott's contract by 1 year

NEW DELHI, 10 DEC

Jonathan Trott will continue as Afghanistan's head coach for another year after the country's cricket board extended his contract through 2025. The announcement comes a few months ahead of next year's Champions Trophy, where Afghanistan will make its maiden appearance. The 43-year-old former England batter has been Afghanistan's head coach since July 2022, and under his guidance, the team has made impressive strides in international cricket. "The Afghanistan Cricket Board wishes Trott the best of luck for his next year's stint with Afghan Atalan as he strives to elevate Afghanistan cricket further on the global stage," the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) said in a statement. —*PTI*

Dhillon banned by ICC for attempt to fix matches

DUBAI, 10 DEC

Sunny Dhillon, a former assistant coach of an Abu Dhabi T10 League franchise, was on Tuesday banned from all forms of cricket for six years by the sport's governing body for "attempting" to fix matches. Dhillon was charged last year. The ban has been back-dated to September 13, 2023, the date Dhillon was provisionally suspended. "Sunny Dhillon has been found to have breached the Emirates Cricket Board (ECB) Anti-Corruption Code and has been banned from all cricket for six years," said the ICC in a statement. Dhillon, a former assistant coach of a franchise team, was one of eight individuals charged last year for breaching the Anti-Corruption Code. The charges are related to the 2021 Abu Dhabi T10 Cricket League and alleged attempts to influence the outcome of matches during the tournament.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X

Mark Taylor slams Siraj's premature celebrations

ADELAIDE, 10 DEC

Former Australian captain Mark Taylor believes Mohammed Siraj tends to celebrate wickets prematurely without waiting for the umpire's decision and his senior India teammates should have a word with the pacer to address this as it is giving him a "bad look". Taylor said Siraj charges down the wicket towards his teammates, without checking the umpire's decision when he thinks that he has got a batter out. "I think with Mohammed Siraj, he's given it out or not," Taylor told Nine News.—*PTI*

Tickets sold out for India-Aus Boxing Day Test

MELBOURNE, 10 DEC

Tickets for the opening day of the fourth Test between India and Australia at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground have sold out, highlighting the public's strong interest in the prestigious Border-Gavaskar Trophy. The strong demand for tickets comes a couple of days after hosts Australia made a stunning comeback, handing India a 10-wicket defeat in Adelaide to level the five-match series 1-1. The two rivals will head to the MCG for the Boxing Day Test, starting December 26 after the third Test in Brisbane starting Saturday. "All available public tickets for Day 1 of the NRMA Insurance Boxing Day Test have been sold," Cricket Australia posted on their 'X' account on Tuesday.—*PTI*

Virat Kohli working on his Gabba-specific plans

Rahul looked more subdued, focusing more on his defence

Virat Kohli with an intensive net session PHOTO: PTI

ADELAIDE 10 DEC

Reeling from their humiliating 10-wicket defeat in the pink-ball Test, the under-fire Indian batters, led by Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, turned their attention to red-ball preparations with an intensive net session here on Tuesday, aiming to bounce back in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. While Australia moved to Brisbane for the third Test on Saturday, the Indian team chose to stay back, focusing on honing their red-ball skills, particularly their defensive techniques and judgment in leaving deliveries. "It's time to look ahead. Preparations for the Brisbane Test starts right here in Adelaide," the BCCI posted on X, sharing a video of Team India's practice.

Struggling with poor form, having scored just 142 runs with only one fifty (52) in his last 12 innings, the Indian skipper, who rejoined the team after the birth of his son, aimed to quickly regain his rhythm as he faced both Indian spinners and pacers.

Dropped himself to No 6, Rohit was capped scores of three and six; first, he was adjudged LBW to a fuller delivery that nipped back, while in the second essay.

Kohli, who ended his 16-month century drought with a hundred in Perth.—*PTI*

Time for Captain Rohit to stand up & inspire

Adelaide, 10 DEC

India captain Rohit Sharma has some tough questions to answer after the team's defeat in the pink-ball Test against Australia in Adelaide. Rohit replaced Bumrah as the skipper for the team after India comprehensively defeated Australia in the opening match at Perth. However, Rohit's captaincy looked lackluster in the day-night Test, where India suffered a humbling 10-wicket defeat. As experts pose critical questions in front of Rohit, former India batter Aakash Chopra remains baffled by the captain's usage of marquee pacer Jasprit Bumrah in the game. In a video on his YouTube channel, Chopra addresses some questions from fans. As one fan asked about Rohit's captaincy in the match, Chopra was quick to assert how bad the Hitman's decision-making was in Adelaide. "You are right, my friend. Did we bowl bouncers to Head? You have to bowl bouncers on Head's head. Until we do that, he doesn't get out and keeps troubling us. He has done that earlier and is doing it now also. He did that in the World Cup final and the WTC final as well," he said. "Bumrah had bowled a four-over spell and had already picked up a wicket in that. So why did he bowl only four overs, and didn't bowl after that at all? He didn't bowl in the entire session. —*PTI*

THREE-MATCH ODI SERIES

India women aim to avoid clean sweep against Australia

PERTH, 10 DEC

A battered and bruised India will look to avoid a clean sweep and address some glaring issues ahead of next year's 50-over World Cup at home when they face Australia in the third and final women's ODI on Wednesday.

The three-match series against the seven-time defending world champions has served as a harsh reality check for India. They have faltered in batting, bowling, and fielding, with each area contributing to their struggles.

A record 122-run defeat in the second ODI highlighted India's vulnerability. Although the batters shone in patches, they never truly looked to chase down Australia's 371/8.

In batting, the biggest disappointment has come from India's two big stars skipper Harmanpreet Kaur and her deputy Smriti Mandhana.

Mandhana has capped scores of 8 and 9 in Australia following her century in India's 2-1 home series win over New Zealand in October. The flamboyant opener had been in fine form earlier this year, scoring 450-plus runs at a 70-plus average and she would look to regain her form.

PHOTO: PTI

Harmanpreet, on the other hand, failed to convert her starts with 57 runs from two matches as her captaincy and batting both have come under scrutiny following India's early exit from the T20 World Cup earlier this year.

In the absence of out-of-form opener Shafali Verma, India tried out some different combinations, and the bright spot has been the promising return of Richa Ghosh, who slammed a spirited fifty at the top in the last ODI. Richa's 54 has been the highest score by an Indian batter in the series, in stark contrast to the two centuries and two fifties scored by Australian batters, highlighting the Amol Muzumdar-coached side's batting struggles. In the opening ODI, only four Indian batters could reach double digits.

The match starts at 8.50 am IST. —*PTI*

Pissay's rise to the top in world of rally

DUBAI, 10 DEC

There was a brief pause before Aishwarya Pissay, the record-breaking Indian road racing and rally rider, delved into the origins of her decade-long journey and why she chose to pursue a career in rally racing.

There was a brief pause before Aishwarya Pissay, the record-breaking Indian road racing and rally rider, delved into the origins of her decade-long journey and why she chose to pursue a career in rally racing. Eventually, the 29-year-old, one of the earliest TVS Racing woman factory racers, had a smile across her face, as she figured out how to respond. "Why rally? I wanted to be at the pinnacle of racing and MotoGP when I started. When I realised it wasn't something that I could reach, I made a career switch to rally."

"It challenges you to a point where you want to give up and you're questioning yourself, 'Why are you doing this? Why can't you be doing something easier?', but that hunger to want to push through that and still achieve our goal."

Her passion for motorcycles helped her find new meaning in her life and vaulted her into the history books. "I started riding motorcycles as a hobby," said Aishwarya. "I would do it on the weekends and then slowly I had a buck for speed. So, I started training for racing.

"When I started racing, it was more about the technique and the skill of an athlete than gender. So, when the helmet went on, it was just a motorcycle and the athlete."

She became the first Indian to win a motorsport world title when she bagged a World Championship medal with her 2019 FIM Bajas World Cup victory and now holds a record-breaking three World Cup medals.

Speaking about the historic triumph, she said it was special for a multitude of reasons. "I don't have a lot of words to explain it because that's how amazing it was. —*PTI*

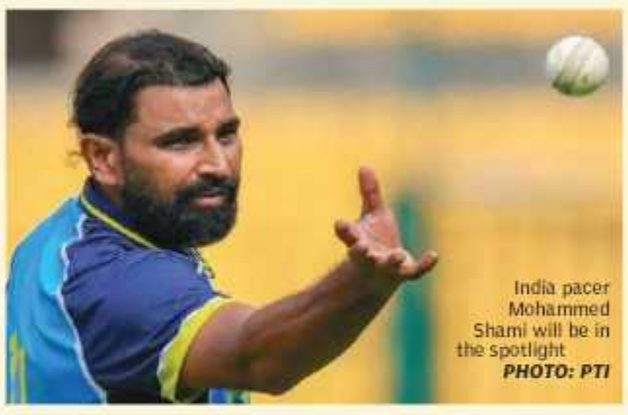
SMA T20 QUARTERFINAL

Shami in focus as Bengal faces Baroda

Bengaluru 10 DEC

Continuing his fine run in his comeback from ankle surgery, India pacer Mohammed Shami will be in the spotlight as Bengal faces a strong challenge from a rampaging Baroda in the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 quarterfinal here on Wednesday.

Shami played a key role in Bengal's thrilling three-run win over Chandigarh to help them enter the last-eight stage.Batting at No. 10, Shami hit a crucial unbeaten 17-ball 32 to lift Bengal to 159 for 9. With the ball, he bowled a tight spell, taking 1/13 in his initial three overs.In all, Shami has now played nine domestic games one Ranji Trophy (42.3 overs) and eight SMAT T20 games (31.3 overs) after returning to action. He has bowled a total of 64 overs and taken 16 wickets.



India pacer Mohammed Shami will be in the spotlight PHOTO: PTI

But, Baroda has sounded a warning as they sizzled with the bat in the competition by setting a world record for the highest total in men's T20 cricket, posting 349/5 against Sikkim to storm into the quarterfinals.They also broke the record for most sixes in a T20 innings, hitting 37.Bhanu Pania led the charge with a blistering 134 off 51 balls, supported by Shivalik Sharma (55 off 17) and Vishnu Solanki (50 off 16). —*PTI*

Champions League: Man City seek comfort to ease

MANCHESTER, 10 DEC

Manchester City's malaise leaves the English champions in the unusual position of fretting over qualification for the knockout stages of the Champions League ahead of a tricky trip to Italian giants Juventus.

City have won just once in their past nine games in all competitions, with an injury crisis and a loss of form for some of their biggest stars leading to the worst run of Pep Guardiola's managerial career.

Despite a 4-1 humbling by Sporting Lisbon and an embarrassing collapse from 3-0 up to draw 3-3 against Feyenoord, they are still in a position to qualify for the new league-phase format.

They sit 17th in the 36-team table, with a top-24 finish enough to secure a place in the playoff round at the least.

However, their chances of a direct entry to the last 16 by

PHOTO: X

finishing in the top eight looks slim, with another difficult trip to Paris Saint-Germain to come in January before a home game against Club Brugge.

The Champions League is even more significant for City this season with their Premier League title defence seemingly in tatters.

After an unprecedented four consecutive English top-flight titles, the champions, in fourth place, trail Liverpool by eight points, and Arne Slot's men also have a game in hand. —*PTI*

FIFA set to declare Saudi Arabia as 2034 WC host

DUBAI, 10 DEC

FIFA will confirm the hosts of the 2030 and 2034 World Cups on Wednesday, with a joint bid led by Morocco, Spain, and Portugal set to be awarded the former, and the latter being handed to Saudi Arabia.

The awarding of hosting rights for both tournaments will go to a vote during a FIFA Congress to be held virtually, but there is no doubt about the outcomes with neither bid having a rival.

The 2030 tournament will mark a century since the first World Cup was held in Uruguay, and as a result,t the bid will also see the South American nation handed a game along with Argentina and Paraguay.

That makes it a remarkable and completely unprecedented bid, involving three different continental confederations.

FIFA already confirmed over a year ago that the joint proposal led by Morocco, Spain, and Portugal was the sole contender for 2030, with all other potential candidacies having fallen by the wayside.

Saudi Arabia is all set to be officially announced as 2034 FIFA World Cup hosts on Wednesday PHOTO: X/ @FIFAWORLDCUP

A joint British and Irish bid was abandoned when they decided to focus on hosting Euro 2028, while there were suggestions of a bid from South Korea, China, Japan, and North Korea.

Four South American countries launched a joint bid in 2019, convinced that the centenary World Cup should entirely take place on the same continent where it all began.

In late 2022, UEFA promoted a bid to unite Spain and Portugal with war-torn Ukraine in a show of "solidarity" following the Russian invasion.

However, Ukraine was quietly dropped from that candidacy last year as Morocco joined forces with the Iberian neighbors, while South America agreed to step aside in exchange for being awarded the hosting of three games, one each for Uruguay, Paraguay, and Argentina.

Following these "centenary celebrations" in the comparative chill of the southern hemisphere winter, the six teams involved – along with their fans – will have to cross the Atlantic Ocean to play a part in the remaining 101 matches.

This tentacular tournament will conclude with the final on July 21, and it is yet to be seen where that game will be staged.

Spain, which hosted the 1982 World Cup, is set to be the centerpiece as it boasts 11 of the 20 proposed stadiums.

Morocco which has tried and failed on five previous occasions to be awarded the staging of the tournament will become the second African nation to host the competition after South Africa in 2010. —*PTI*

WORLD CHESS C'SHIP

Nerves to play crucial role for Gukesh, Ding

SINGAPORE, 10 DEC

A handy lead has slipped through his grip but Indian Grandmaster D Gukesh will rely on his steely resolve to bounce back when he takes on enigmatic defending champion Ding Liren in the 13th game of the World Chess Championship that has been quite a roller-coaster ride for the players.

The 18-year-old Gukesh, who is the youngest challenger to the title, and the 32-year-old defending champion from China have been locked in an intriguing battle in which both have held leads for not too long.

They will resume on Wednesday after a day of rest.

India's Gukesh D, and China's Ding Liren during the press conference after the 12th game of the FIDE World Chess Championship 2024, in Singapore PHOTO: X

The scores are currently tied at 6-6 with the first to reach 7.5 assured of the coveted crown.

After squandering away a full-point lead with just three games to go, the 12th-round loss was heartbreaking for the young Indian, and many experts believe that he will go for an aggressive approach in his last game with white pieces under Classical time control.

It won't be off the mark to say that nerves are likely to play a crucial role in the final stretch.

The scores were tied 5-5 after game 10 but the last two decisive games thereafter have breathed new life into an otherwise well-contested match in which both players have had their chances.

After what he described as a see-saw victory in the 11th game, Gukesh was simply not himself in the 12th game and his idea to play a new position for the first time backfired spectacularly —*PTI*

LaLiga: Early goal enough as Getafe beat Espanyol

MADRID, 10 DEC

Getafe beat fellow struggler Espanyol 1-0 to move clear of La Liga's relegation zone and pile pressure on its Catalan rival on Monday.

On-loan Real Madrid striker Álvaro Rodriguez got the only goal with a deft header after seven minutes.

Both sides had chances, especially in a more lively second half, but it remained 1-0.

Getafe jumped two places into 15th and opened a three-point gap on Espanyol in third to last.

The defeat was the sixth consecutive away from home for Manolo González's side.

Only 7,559 spectators turned out at the Coliseum but home goalkeeper David Soria said

PHOTO: X

Getafe's season would be decided on its patch.

"We have to be strong at home, in front of our fans," Soria said. "This is where our salvation lies." —*PTI*